

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 UPW-01 IO-13 OMB-01 /082 R

DRAFTED BY EA/ PRCM: KCDOUGALL: MFR

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APPROVED BY EA/ PRCM RWSULLIVAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 044327

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: MOPS, CH

SUBJECT: RELEASE OF DOWNEY, FLYNN AND SMITH BY PRC

1. WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY ZIEGLER ISSUED FOLLOWING
ANNOUNCEMENT TODAY: QUOTE

THE WHITE HOUSE LEARNED ON WEDNESDAY EVENING OF THE ILLNESS
OF JOHN DOWNEY' S MOTHER, AND THE PRESIDENT ASKED THAT THIS
BE COMMUNICATED TO PRIME MINISTER CHOU EN- LAI ON HIS
BEHALF, CALLING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PRIME MINISTER THE
FACTS OF MR. DOWNEY' S MOTHER' S ILLNESS.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE' S REPUBLIC OF CHINA HAS
INFORMED THE PRESIDENT THAT IT HAS DECIDED TO COMMUTE JOHN
DOWNEY' S TERM AND RELEASE HIM ON MARCH THE 12 TH.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE' S REPUBLIC OF CHINA WILL
RELEASE MR. DOWNEY, FOLLOWING THE DECISION TO COMMUTE HIS
TERM, AT THE BORDER BETWEEN THE PEOPLE' S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
AND HONG KONG, AS I SAID, ON MARCH THE 12 TH.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE' S REPUBLIC
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OF CHINA, AND IN THE SAME COMMUNICATION, HAS INFORMED THE
PRESIDENT AND THE UNITED STATES THAT THEY WILL RELEASE
LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ROBERT J. FLYNN OF THE UNITED STATES

NAVY AND MAJOR PHILIP E. SMITH, OF THE UNITED STATES AIR
FORCE, WHO HAVE BEEN HELD IN THE PEOPLE' S REPUBLIC OF
CHINA OVER THE PAST YEARS, ON THE 15 TH OF MARCH.

AS YOU RECALL, DR. KISSINGER MENTIONED TO YOU IN HIS
BRIEFING HERE FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM THE PEOPLE' S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA THAT THEY HAD INDICATED THAT MR. FLYNN
AND MR. SMITH WOULD BE RELEASED DURING THE 60 DAY PERIOD OF
THE INDOCHINA AGREEMENT.

PRESIDENT NIXON WANTS TO EXPRESS HIS PERSONAL APPRECIATION
TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE' S REPUBLIC OF CHINA FOR
THIS ACTION. END QUOTE

2. CONGEN SHOULD ANSWER PRESS QUERIES BY REFERRING TO ABOVE
ANNOUNCEMENT. QUESTIONS WHICH CANNOT BE ANSWERED IN THAT
WAY SHOULD BE REFERRED TO DEPARTMENT. ROGERS

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

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